GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:30
ANSWERED ON:20.11.2002
TACKLING BIO TERRORISM
AKHILESH YADAV

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to make the laboratories of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) capable of tackling the dangers of bio-terrorism; (

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are also considering seeking help from foreign organisations for the said purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 30 FOR 20.11.2002

(a) The Government of India has given higher priority to strengthen the country`s capacity to combat the threat of bio-terrorism.It has developed plan to train the staff, and upgrade laboratories of various national level institutes including those of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The ICMR has developed a detailed plan of action for the purpose.

(b) According to Indian Council of Medical Research, majority of its Institutes are disease specific.Therefore, keeping in mind the expertise available, they have been identified with specific organism. Because of the infectious nature of these organisms, they are needed to be handled in specifically designed bio-safety laboratories. A BSL-3 facility is being commissioned at Pune at a cost of Rs.14 crores. ICMR is assessing the need to have more such facilities at other centres.

(c)&(d): In order to ensure that these laboratories are of international standards, the assistance of experts of Centres of Disease Control, Atlanta, USA, has been taken in vetting the design prepared by Indian architects.